

**BY-LAWS
of the
REGION 6 REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM**

Article I -NAME

The name of the organization shall be the REGION 6 REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM (RRT).

Article II - AUTHORITY

The National Response System is the mechanism for emergency response to discharges of oil into navigable waters of the United States that may affect natural and other resources, and releases of hazardous substances that may present a danger to public health or welfare. The system provides a framework for coordination among federal, state and local responders, and responsible parties.

The National Response System is described in the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), found in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 300. The NCP is required by section 105 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, 42 U.S.C. 9605, as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA), Public Law (P.L.) 99-499 (hereinafter CERCLA), and by section 311 (d) of the Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 U.S.C.1 321 (d), as amended by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA), P.L. 101 -380, and Executive Orders (EO) 12580 and 12777.

The NCP establishes four organizational levels for planning, preparedness and response: The National Response Team (NRT), Regional Response Teams (RRTs), On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) and Remedial Project Managers (RPMs), and Area Committees. Subpart C of the NCP describes the roles and responsibilities for planning and preparedness at the federal, state, and local levels to achieve a coordinated response system.

Article III - MEMBERSHIP

The Region 6 RRT membership consists of 15 federal agencies and 5 states with responsibilities, interests, and expertise in various aspects of emergency response to pollution incidents.

Region 6 RRT members are as follows:

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)	Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Department of Agriculture (DOA)	Department of Commerce (DOC)
Department of Defense (DOD)	General Services Administration (GSA)
Department of Energy (DOE)	Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)
Department of the Interior (DOI)	State of Arkansas
Department of Justice (DOJ)	State of Louisiana
Department of Labor (DOL)	State of New Mexico
Department of State (DOS)	State of Oklahoma
Department of Transportation (DOT)	State of Texas

The representatives of EPA and the USCG shall act as Co-Chairs of Region 6 RRT except when the RRT is activated for response action. When the RRT is activated for response action, the Chair shall be the member agency providing the OSC/RPM.

Each participating federal agency shall designate one member and at least one alternate member to the RRT. Agencies whose regional subdivisions do not correspond to the standard federal regions may designate additional representatives to the standing RRT to ensure appropriate coverage of the standard federal region.

Each state governor is requested to assign an agency(s) to represent the state on the Region 6 RRT; to designate representatives to work with the RRT in developing the Regional Integrated Contingency Plan (RICP); to plan for, make available, and coordinate state resources; and to serve as the contact point for coordination of response with local government agencies, whether or not represented on the RRT.

The state's RRT representative should keep the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) apprised of RRT activities and coordinate RRT activities with the SERC.

Indian tribal governments may arrange for representation with the RRT appropriate to their geographical location.

Article IV - PURPOSE

Regional planning and coordination of preparedness and response actions are accomplished through the RRT. In the case of a discharge of oil, preparedness activities will be carried out in conjunction with Area Committees, as appropriate. In the case of a discharge of hazardous substances, preparedness activities will be carried out in conjunction with the Regional Integrated Contingency Plan (RICP).

The RRT provides the appropriate regional mechanism for development and coordination of preparedness activities before a response action is taken and for coordination of assistance and advice to the OSC/RPM during such response actions; and guidance to Area Committees, as appropriate, to ensure inter-area consistency, and consistency of individual Area Contingency Plans (ACP) with the RICP and NCP.

Article V - ORGANIZATION

The two principal components of the RRT mechanism are a Standing Team, which consists of designated representatives from each participating federal agency, state governments, and local governments (as agreed upon by the states); and Incident-Specific Teams formed from the Standing Team when the RRT is activated for a response. On Incident-Specific Teams, participation by the RRT member agencies will relate to the technical nature of the incident and its geographic location.

The Executive Secretariat is to provide administrative management of the RRT and oversight of the RRT process and structure.

The membership of the Executive Secretariat shall consist of the EPA and USCG RRT Co-Chairs, with appropriate support staff, and the Chairs of the Preparedness Committee, the Response Committee, and the Science and Technology Committee.

The RRT Coordinator's positions are hereby created to organize and assist in the administration of the RRT, with supervision from the Co-Chairs. The RRT Coordinator's positions will reside in the EPA and the USCG.

Article VI -DUTIES

Standing RRT

The role of the standing RRT includes the development of communications systems and procedures, planning, coordination, training, evaluation, and enhancement of preparedness and related matters on a region-wide basis. The RRT is responsible for the coordination of Area Committees for these functions, as appropriate, and for maintaining the applicability and effectiveness of the RICP.

The standing RRT shall recommend changes in the regional response organization as needed.

- nominate appropriately qualified representatives from their agencies to work with OSCs in developing and maintaining the RICP and ACPs;
- attend all Standing RRT meetings, and coordinating on appropriate Incident-Specific response;
- revise the RICP as needed;
- evaluate the preparedness of the participating agencies and the effectiveness of ACPs for the federal response to discharges and releases;
- review and comment, to the extent practicable, on local emergency response plans or other issues related to the preparation, implementation, or exercise of such plans upon request of a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), through the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC);
- provide assistance to state and local governments in preparedness, planning, and training for emergency response;
- evaluate regional and local responses to discharges or releases on a continuing basis, considering available legal remedies, equipment readiness, and coordination among responsible public agencies and private organizations, and recommend improvements;
- recommend revisions of the NCP to the RRT, based on observations of response operations;
- review OSC actions to ensure that the RICP and ACPs are effective;
- encourage the state and local response community to improve its preparedness for response;

- conduct advance planning for use of dispersants, surface washing agents, surface collecting agents, burning agents, bioremediation agents, or other chemical agents in accordance with any applicable laws, regulations, or requirements;
- be prepared to provide response resources to major discharges or releases outside the region;
- conduct or participate in training and exercises as necessary to encourage preparedness activities of the response community within the region;
- provide letter reports on RRT activities to the NRT twice a year, no later than January 31 and July 31. At a minimum, reports should summarize recent activities, organizational changes, operational concerns, and efforts to improve state and local coordination;
- ensure maximum participation in the regional exercise program for announced and unannounced exercises; and
- support US/Mexico Joint Response Team (JRT) planning and response initiatives (Inland and coastal)

Incident-Specific RRT

During prolonged removal or remedial action, the RRT may not need to be activated or may need to be activated only on a limited basis, or may need to have available only those member agencies of the RRT who are directly affected or who can provide direct response assistance.

The role of the Incident-Specific team is determined by the operational requirements of the response to a specific discharge or release. Appropriate levels of activation and/or notification of the Incident-Specific RRT, including participation by state and local governments, shall be determined by the designated RRT Chair for the incident, based on the RICP.

The Incident-Specific RRT supports the designated OSC/RPM. The designated OSC/RPM directs response efforts and coordinates all other efforts at the scene of a discharge or release.

The RRT may be activated by the Chair as an incident-specific response team when a discharge or release exceeds the response capability available to the OSC/RPM in the place where it occurs or where it transects state boundaries; or if it may pose a substantial threat to the public health or welfare of the United States or the environment, or to regionally significant amounts of property; or is a worst case discharge, as described in 40 CFR300.324.

The Incident-Specific Team will be activated during any discharge or release upon a request from the OSC/RPM, or from any RRT representative, to the Chair of the RRT. Requests for RRT activation shall later be confirmed in writing.

The Region 6 Regional Response Center (RRC) will be activated upon request from the OSC/RPM and will provide facilities and personnel for communications, information storage, and other requirements for coordinating response activities.

Each member, or an appropriate alternate, of the Standing RRT should be notified immediately when the Incident-Specific RRT is activated.

The RICP shall specify detailed criteria for the activation of the RRT.

When the RRT is activated for a discharge or release, agency representatives shall meet at the call of the Chair and may:

- monitor and evaluate reports from the OSC/RPM, advise the OSC/RPM on the duration and extent of response, and recommend to the OSC/RPM specifications to respond to the discharge or release;
- request other federal, state, or local governments to provide resources under their existing authorities to respond to a discharge or release, or to monitor response operations;
- assist the OSC/RPM prepare information releases for the public and for communication with the NRT;
- if the circumstances warrant, make recommendations to the regional or district head of the agency providing the OSC/RPM that a different OSC/RPM should be designated;
- submit pollution reports to the NRC as significant developments occur.

The RRT can be deactivated when the incident-specific RRT Chair determines that the OSC/RPM no longer requires RRT assistance.

Notification of the RRT may be appropriate when full activation is not necessary, with systematic communication of pollution reports or other means to keep RRT members informed as to actions of potential concern to a particular agency, or to assist in later RRT evaluation of regionwide response effectiveness.

Executive Secretariat

On matters of policy and initiatives involving the RRT, the Executive Secretariat will prepare, review, and provide an executive summary to the RRT membership for decision. The Executive Secretariat will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of RRT approved policies and initiatives.

The Executive Secretariat will approve all nominations to the RRT standing committees.

The Executive Secretariat will provide liaison with the NRT Executive Secretariat.

RRT Coordinators

The RRT Coordinators will advise the Co-Chairs as to observed progress of the RRT, programs for enhancement of the RRT, critiques and comments from RRT members and participants, and regular personal communications with RRT committees and members.

The Coordinators will prepare the format and agenda for the semi-annual RRT meetings, set up the meeting logistics, identify the attendees and send out invitations, brief speakers, and assist in scheduling functions that will enhance the meeting. The Coordinators will prepare necessary issue papers requiring discussion at Standing RRT meetings and disseminate such to RRT member agencies with meeting agenda forty-five (45) days prior to scheduled meetings.

The RRT Coordinators will arrange for the transcription of standing RRT meeting minutes; salient discussion items will be distributed to RRT member agencies by the RRT Coordinators in condensed format sixty (60) days after each Standing RRT meeting.

The Coordinators will prepare the format and agenda for conference calls involving the Executive Secretariat and other RRT members.

The Coordinators will maintain communications with industry representatives, RPM's, OSC's, LEPC members, and first responders on behalf of the RRT.

Article VII - Committees

The Region 6 RRT shall have three (3) standing committees: Preparedness, Response, and Science and Technology.

Each committee shall be composed of at least five (5) members including the Committee Chair, nominated by a member of the RRT, and approved by the Executive Secretariat. Membership on the standing committees is finite. New members may be posted to committees as needed. The membership on the standing committees shall be reviewed by the Executive Secretariat every two years. Changes in the membership shall be subject to approval by the Executive Secretariat.

The Preparedness Committee promotes enhanced preparedness capabilities at the regional, state, and local levels for oil and hazardous materials spills.

In pursuit of its purpose, the RRT Preparedness Committee implements activities designed to promote the utilization of state-of-the-art methods and technologies for planning and preparedness by the RRT, OSCs, participating states, and local jurisdictions for oil and hazardous materials spills and releases; assist the RRT members in enhancing their preparedness capabilities; and stimulate preparedness activities of the member agencies of the RRT, and the RRT as a collective organization.

The Response Committee provides a forum for the RRT to assess the effectiveness of incident reporting and response mechanisms established by the NCP, to provide feedback to On-Scene Coordinator's (OSCs) and RRTs regarding their reports of response actions, and to make recommendations to all levels regarding improvements to the response system.

The committee:

- (1) highlights and summarizes response related lessons learned from OSC reports,
- (2) identifies gaps in coverage or needs for additional guidance throughout the regional response system, and
- (3) abstracts case history information about technologies or procedures for the purpose of providing useful feedback to RRTs, OSCs and other participants in the response system.

The purpose of committee recommendations to the RRT are:

- (1) to apprise the RRT of response issues of interest or which need to be addressed by the committee through review of reports or research and development activities, and
- (2) through RRT action, advance technology or otherwise improve response action.

The objectives of the committee are to make recommendations to improve overall incident response, enhance coordination with state, local, and private responders, and encourage timely updates of NCP, RICP, and ACPs as needed.

The Science and Technology Committee provides a forum for the RRT to fulfill its NCP delegated responsibilities in research and development. The Committee will monitor responder-related research and development, testing, and evaluation activities of RRT agencies to enhance coordination, avoid duplication of effort, and facilitate research in support of response activities.

The RRT may consider and make recommendations to appropriate agencies on necessary research, development, demonstration, and evaluation to improve response capabilities.

"Ad Hoc" committees must be established and approved by the RRT through a majority vote of the members. "Ad Hoc" committees will have the mission of assisting the RRT on issues and initiatives that are deemed necessary to the conduct of the mission of the RRT.

Article VIII - Meetings

Regular meetings of the Standing RRT will be convened at least semi-annually. The meetings will be hosted by the Co-Chairs, alternating between them.

The Standing RRT shall meet to review response actions carried out during the preceding period. Reports from the standing committees, and from the RRT federal and state members will be presented. New initiatives introduced will be discussed by the membership and may be assigned to the standing committees for further review. Presentations and discussions by RRT members or invited participants and guests concerning programs and initiatives within the region will be scheduled.

The regular meetings of the standing RRT shall be open. In addition to the members and alternates, invited attendance and participation shall include On-Scene Coordinators (OSC's), Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC's), industry representatives, and elected officials.

Executive Secretariat meetings may be scheduled by either the EPA or USCG Co-Chair. These meetings shall be held to work on policy matters and inter-agency business, or matters that may require further investigation before presentation to the RRT.

The standing committees shall meet at least quarterly to review their activities and progress toward their initiatives, and on programs/projects assigned by the RRT Co-Chairs. Each standing committee shall make a formal report to the RRT membership at the semi-annual meetings.

Executive Sessions may be requested by any member of the RRT and will be convened by either Co-Chair. These meetings will be held to discuss issues of a sensitive nature such as policy matters, internal agency business, and personnel matters. Attendance at Executive Sessions shall be restricted to Federal and State member agency representatives and other individuals as deemed appropriate to the subject(s) to be discussed.

Article IX - Voting and Quorum

A quorum shall consist of those RRT members who attend the meeting.

Each RRT member, as identified in Article III, is accorded one (1) vote. The majority vote will constitute passage or rejection of the matter. If a vote is requested via e-mail or fax, a majority vote of the members voting will constitute acceptance or rejection.

A consensus vote on all matters brought before the standing RRT is desirable. In the event of a dispute that cannot be resolved, the matter will be referred to the applicable standing committee for further investigation and reported to the Executive Secretariat. The Executive Secretariat will refer the matter to the RRT members via e-mail and request a vote on the issue.

Votes may be cast in person by the member, the officially designated alternate, or by proxy. Each proxy must be executed in writing (may be electronic) by the RRT member or designated alternate and provided to an RRT Co-Chair prior to the meeting at which a vote will be taken.

Upon the activation of an Incident-Specific RRT in response to a discharge or release, a quorum will consist of those members notified and participating either on-scene or by telephone. Passage of a motion requires a majority vote of the Incident-Specific Team.

Article X - Revisions

Revision of these By-Laws will be accomplished by written submission to the Executive Secretariat. After review of the proposed revisions, the Executive Secretariat will submit same to the RRT membership for review and vote. A two-thirds (2/3) vote by the RRT membership will be required for approval of the proposed changes or revisions.

Revisions to attachments will be accomplished as member information changes. These updates will not require a vote by the RRT.

Article XI - Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rules of Order (new revision), shall govern all proceedings of the RRT, the Executive Secretariat, and Executive Sessions. The RRT Co-Chairs will assume the role and responsibilities of "RRT Parliamentarian" for all matters requiring a parliamentary ruling.

The By-Laws of the Region 6 Regional Response Team are approved by the membership as affirmed by the signatures of the Region 6 Regional Response Team Co-Chairs.

Charles A. Gazda
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 6 Regional Response Team Co-Chair

12 / 11 / 2000

Captain Gordon Marsh
U.S. Coast Guard
Region 6 Regional Response Team Co-Chair

12 / 05 / 2000

Region 6 - RRT EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

EPA - RRT Co-Chair

USCG - Co-Chair

Chair - Preparedness Committee

Chair - Response Committee

Chair - Science And Technology Committee

EPA - RRT Coordinator

USCG - RRT Coordinator